THE

PRODIGAL SON;

AN

ORATORIO,

Written by Mr. HULL.

Set to MUSIC by Mr. ARNOLD.

There is Joy in the Presence of the Angels of God, over one Sinner that Repenteth.

Luke, Chap. 15. Ver. 10.

LONDON:

Printed for J. BELL, near Exeter-Exchange in the Strand.

MDCCLXXIII.

THE CHARACTERS

FATHER,

ELDEST SON,

YOUNGEST SON, the PRODIGAL,

His COMPANIONS.

MOTHER,

DAUGHTER,

FRIENDS and NEIGHBOURS,

RUSTICS.

CHORUS of INVISIBLE SPIRITS.

TO

JOHN BEARD, Esq.

SIR,

ANY Writer of an Oratorio, an entire Stranger to your private Worth, might, with the utmost Propriety, dedicate such a Work to You, as a grateful Tribute to that high Reputation, which You acquired, and maintained, for a Succession of Years, in this Species of Entertainment. A *Stranger*, I say, might do this; but a *Friend* leaves that Reputation to speak for itself in the Memory of all true Judges, and Admirers of the *Sacred Drama*. You are therefore desired to accept this Attempt, merely as a Testimony of continual Esteem and Affection, from

Your very sincere Friend,

and obedient Servant,

THOMAS HULL.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

http://archive.org/details/prodigalsonorato00arno

THE PRODIGAL SON.

PART FIRST.

FATHER, MOTHER, E. SON, DAUGHTER, and CHORUS of NEIGHBOURS.

CHORUS.

WHAT dear Delights the Duties bring,
Wherein thus daily we engage!
From filial Love what Comforts ſpring,
To warm the Hearts of ſhiv'ring Age!

AIR.

E. BRO. *Great* GOD, *while ſuppliant thus we bend,*
Thy kind, thy gracious Hearing lend
To this our fervent Pray'r!
O! may our Sire's remaining Day
Enjoy a Calm, a ſoft Decay,
His Eve ſerenely fair!

DAUG. *But if Diſeaſe, with venom'd Dart,*
Or Sorrow, wound the rev'rend Heart
Of thoſe who gave us Breath;
Let us, their deſtin'd Anguiſh ſhare,
Prevent or dry each painful Tear,
And ſmooth the Bed of Death.

CHORUS repeated.

What dear Delights the Duties bring,
Wherein thus daily we engage!
From filial Love what Comforts ſpring,
To warm the Hearts of ſhiv'ring Age!

RECITATIVE.

FATH. Tis true, my pious Children; in my Breaſt
I feel the kindly Glow. If Love like yours
Could furniſh ev'ry Joy that Life requir'd,
I ſhould be amply bleſt. Beloved Conſort!
Improver dear of ev'ry Happineſs,
And Light'ner of each Care, begin the Song:
Requite we, far as feeble Age permits,
Their grateful Strain, which each revolving Day,
Due as it ſmiles, atteſts. Begin, my Comfort.

AIR and DUETT.

MOTH. *New Bleſſings, new Life ye impart,*
So oft as this Tribute is giv'n;
The Pray'r of the dutiful Heart,
Like Incenſe, ariſes to Heav'n.

FATH.

FATH. *For this thro' your mortal Eſtate*
In Peace ſhall ye walk, Hand in Hand;
And your Joys ſhall be many and great,
And your Days ſhall be long in the Land.

RECITATIVE.

FATH. But ſay, my Children, where's the ſecond Prop
Of my declining Age? Why joins not he
Your Oriſons, and claims his wonted Bleſſing?

MOTH. Why joins he not indeed?

E. SON. My honour'd Father,
High on the Mountain's Summit, that o'er-hangs
The ſwelling Flood, and of the diſtant Plains
(Teeming with Wealth) commands an ample View,
I left him gazing on the wide Expanſe,
And Joy enlarg'd his Eye.

MOTH. Ah! ſeeſt thou not,
Lord of my Life and Love, e'er ſince thy Hand,
(Profuſely kind!) on his ill-judg'd Requeſt,
Allotted him a Portion of thy Wealth,
Averſe to theſe our Duties and Delights,
Our wonted ſocial Converſe, wide he ſtrays,
Shunning thine Eye, thy Counſel--much I fear him.

FATH. Vex not thy tranquil Mind with fancy'd Terrors.
By young Ambition led, and warm Deſires,
Error awhile may warp his ductile Heart;
But ſtubborn Vice, or black Ingratitude---
My Son, ſure, knows them not

AIR.

To yonder Summit ſtretch thine Eye,
That young, aſpiring Elm eſpy,
The Victim of each angry Sky,
To ev'ry Blaſt a Prey!
As weak, defenceleſs, and oppreſs'd,
By ſtormy Paſſions ſore diſtreſs'd,
My pliant Boy may ſink depreſs'd
In Life's uncertain Day.

Like that too eaſily inclin'd
To change with ev'ry ſhifting Wind,
Till rooting Time mature his Mind,
And Reaſon's Shoots appear;
Then all the Virtues bloom apace,
Then, comely in his ripen'd Grace,
He ſtands, the Glory of the Chace,
Majeſtically fair!

RECITATIVE.

MOTH. Oh! may it ſo betide!---behold, he ſeeks thee---
Not ſuch, I ween, the Countenance he wore,
Ere dowried with thy Bounty.

The PRODIGAL *approaches, with Companions.*

PROD. Father, hail!---
Thy Hand hath giv'n me Wealth, I thank thee for it;
But more remains to grant---thy free Conſent
To taſte the Pleaſures, diſtant Climes afford:
This unbeſtow'd, the firſt is valueleſs,
And thou may'ſt take it back.

MOTH.

MOTH. Too true my Fears!
Baſe and ungrateful, is it not enough
Thou haſt withdrawn from his indulgent Love,
With jealous Hand, thy Share of worldly Wealth?
Muſt thou invade the Quiet of his Mind,
That deareſt Treaſure of his Age? Alas!
Yon ſpacious Robe, behold, how ſlight a Covering
For th' Hugeneſs of his Grief!

AIR.

With deep Indents his rev'rend Face
Time's Hand hath furrow'd o'er---
Canſt thou, perverſe, and void of Grace,
Endure to wound him more?
His Sorrows, ſee! too big to ſpeak,
Swell the pent Heart, and bid it break.

CHORUS.

His Sorrows, ſee! &c.

RECITATIVE.

MOTH. Why alters not thine Eye? Shame, Shame beſet thee,
Thou Stranger-Lad!

FATH. Fond Advocate, forbear!---
I am myſelf again---My Son, behold me!
I have not long to live---and canſt thou leave me?
Plead not theſe falling Tears? for thee, my Child,
More than myſelf, ſuch Sorrows flow.

PROD. Why ſeeks
My Father to retard my riſing Hopes?
Can I, by ſtaying here, recall thy Youth,
Or add a Moment more when Fate demands thee?
For Duty's Cares, and Watchings, thou haſt here
More Children, whom domeſtic Life allures,
And cool Deſires engage: Me ardent Paſſions
And wild Extravagance of Soul enflame.

A I R.

Within one narrow Bound confin'd,
In one poor Path to move,
Is Torture to the ſpacious Mind,
That thro' a World would rove;
Rapid as Air, my active Soul,
Would dart, impatient of Controul,
From Clime to Clime, from Pole to Pole;
Each Sweet would taſte, each Joy attain,
Thro' all Creation's wide Domain.

RECITATIVE.

FATH. I grieve, my Son, to ſay, thy youthful Fancy
Leads thee far wide from Happineſs; from Joys,
That Reaſon would inſpire and give--yet go --
And may thy Hopes be gratified! tho' much
I fear thy Diſappointment.

SIST. Oh, my Brother,
With inattentive Ear, and rocky Heart,
Mock not this kind Advice;

A I R.

A I R.

In vain alas! from Shore to Shore
In ſearch of Bliſs we roam,
And ſtrange Delights abroad explore,
Our beſt reſide at home;
Within the juſt and pious Heart
Our trueſt Joys we find,
Which calm and ſweet Repoſe impart,
And leave no Sting behind.

MOTH. The poiſon'd Cup
Of Riot and Exceſs, Youth's ſureſt Bane,
Too early hath he taſted.---Hence! begone,
Thou, and thy looſe Companions! vex no more
The decent Quiet of our ſober Roof,
Or thy fond Father's Heart.

PROD. I wanted not
This Taunt to urge me; when I next behold
My Mother's Face, perchance with leſs Diſpleaſure
She may receive me.

E. SON. Stay return, my Brother!
Behold our failing Sire, who long hath flouriſh'd,
Like the tall Cedar on aſpiring LEBANON,
With all his growing Saplings branching round!
Oh! view him now!--by Time and Grief impair'd,
'Reft of his Strength, he bends with every Breeze.

MOTH. No longer waſte your unavailing Suit
On that obdurate Wretch, who ſcouls Contempt
On theſe your kind Perſuaſions. To yon Sage

Turn

Turn your Attention; Lo, his trembling Limbs,
His ſwimming Eyes! Ah, catch him, e're he fall,
Ye, pious Pair, and to the Couch convey
Your rev'rend Charge. Tis well-Hear me, thou, ſenſeleſs
Of ev'ry Good, thy God hath ſhow'rd upon thee,
Hear me this once, and tremble!---
Think, not to bear away thy Crimes unpuniſh'd---
Oh! no--- peculiar Plagues are kept in Store
For diſobedient Children.

PROD. to 1ſt. COM. Why is thine Eye thus fix'd? Can the weak Breath
Of an incenſed Woman thus transform thee
A Monument of Wonder? Rouze! awake!
And join our wonted Gladneſs---let the Voice
Of Muſic ſtart him from this gloomy Dream,
Then lead him forth to Realms of varied Bliſs,
And, as we paſs, let ev'ry Hill and Dale
Repeat the jocund Notes.

SONG and CHORUS.

Wake to Muſick, Mirth, and Love!
Let us all the Tranſports prove,
Wine and Beauty can inſpire;
Wine exalts our am'rous Fire.

CHORUS.

Wake to Muſic &c.

PROD. *Welcome the capacious Bowl,*
Welcome to my thirſty Soul!
Speed the copious Draught around,
Care and Thought alike be drown'd!

CHO-

CHORUS.

Welcome the capacious, &c.

PROD. *Welcome, welcome Woman's Charms,*
Welcome to my ardent Arms,
Welcome Charms that raiſe Deſire,
Welcome Wine that feeds the Fire!

CHORUS.

Welcome, Welcome, &c.

END of the FIRST PART.

PART SECOND.

CHORUS of NEIGHBOURS.

CHORUS.

ARISE, great GOD, *with Vengeance riſe,*
The black unnat'ral Wretch confound,
Who dares thy great Beheſts deſpiſe,
Who dares a Parent's Boſom wound!

MOTHER *advances.*

RECITATIVE.

MOTH. No more, my Friends---Heav'n, in its own due Time,
Will ſentence and chaſtiſe. From the ſick Bed,
And pious Taſk aroſe, my Mind is calm,
And harbours no Reſentment. All my Thoughts
Are on this Suff'rer turn'd. While thus I ſue,
That Nature's great Reſtorer may allay
His ſore Inquietudes, his bitter Pangs,
With your good Wiſhes aid the ſuppliant Strain,
Oh! aid, and waſt it to the eternal Throne!

AIR.

AIR.

MOTH. *Grant, holy Lord, that dewy Sleep*
May ſhed its balmy Comforts o'er him!
In gentle Dreams his Senſes ſteep,
And place ideal Joys before him,
That his waking Thoughts may be
Full of Hope, and full of thee!

PRODIGAL and COMPANIONS.

PROD. Why this Suſpenſe? Why ſhould a Moment's Pauſe
Pall the rich Pleaſures of our glowing Hearts?
Joy, like the rapid Ocean's ceaſeleſs Wave,
With unremitting Force ſhould pour along,
While Strength and Nature aid the gen'rous Courſe.

AIR and CHORUS.

PROD. *With Love and Impatience I burn,*
In our Revels let Love have his Turn!
From Pleaſure to Pleaſure we range,
Say, ſay, what is Life without Change?
Away with the Vintage, away with the Bowl,
Till Beauty hath pour'd her Delights on my Soul.

CHORUS.

Away with the Vintage, &c.

II.

PROD. *Then again o'er the Flaggon we meet,*
The Roof-rending Chorus repeat;

As the Goblet the Table o'erflows,
Our Fullneſs of Tranſport it ſhews;
Thus, Thus, let us revel in various Delight,
Let Wine crown the Day and let Love crown the Night

CHORUS.

Thus, thus, let us revel, &c.

RECITATIVE.

2d. Com. See, ſee, behold thy Comrade! ſay, thou Dreamer,
Why, with reluctant Hand, didſt thou upheave
The brimming Bowl, and wherefore did thy Lip
Shun the rich Draught diſtaſteful?

1ſt. Com. With Diſguſt,
Or Shame---I know not what---my Mind is charg'd

AIR.

Within my dark, my troubled Soul,
What ſudden Doubts tumultuous rowl!
Some awful Pow'r uſurps my Heart,
Some awful Voice, cries out, " Depart;"
" *Th' intemperate Board, it's Riots ſhun,*
" *Deſtruction haſtes---away!--- begone!---*

RECITATIVE.

Prod. Stay, my Friend,
And ſhare my Joys! thy lov'd Companion-ſhip
Gives them a double Reliſh.
2d. Com. Let him go;

Our

Our Portion is the more. See where approacheth,
In looſe Attire, a lovely Train of Beauties;
With tripping Gait, and wanton Eye, they court
Our ardent Wiſhes. In delightful Strife
Now war we for the faireſt!

PROD. Various Fancy
In each beholds Attraction. Here I fix --
Theſe auburn Locks, theſe glowing Cheeks, theſe Eyes,
Practis'd in Love's ſoft Eloquence, invite me.

TRIO and CHORUS.

Hither, fair one, hither bend,
Warm Deſires thy Steps attend!
2d. COM. *Hither, fair one, ſpeed thy Way,*
Ardent Throbs brook no Delay!
3d. COM. *Hither, fair one, hither dart,*
Damp not thou a burning Heart!
PROD. *Grandeur thee and Wealth await,*
All the Luxury of State.
2d. COM. *Thee the full the feſtive Board,*
All that Fruits and Wines afford.
3d. COM. *Thee the Pipe, the ſprightly Ball,*
Haſte thee, Nymph, at Muſic's call!
CHORUS. *Hither, fair one, hither bend,*
Warm Deſires thy Steps attend!

RECITATIVE.

2d. COM. What Heart, but to the Throne of Beauty bows,
And owns her Pow'r reſiſtleſs?---See relenting
Thy fav'rite Comrade!

1ſt. COM.

1ſt. Com. No ſuch impious Motive
Recalls my Step; but Zeal for thee, my Friend.
Read'ſt thou not in my Eye ſome horrid Tidings?
Within this Land, fell Famine, meagre Fiend,
With ghaſtly Mein advances. Wide he ſtalks,
And, as he goes, deſtroys; the wretched Ruſtic
Threats Violation to thy treaſur'd Hoards,
To gratify his Wants. Rouze thee, my Friend,
And ope thine Eyes to Virtue!

AIR.

What Stores have been conſum'd!
What Days to Riot doom'd!
See! Ruin aims the deadly Blow,
While yet poſſeſs'd of Pow'r;
Repent the laviſh Hour!
Repent, 'ere ſunk in endleſs woe!

RECITATIVE.

Prod. Hence! Begone!
Thou Poiſon to our Joys! and brood alone
Oe'r thy ſpleen-born Suggeſtions. While the Moment
Of Mirth invites, no Thought of future Ill
Shall interrupt th' Enjoyment. Let us on.

CHORUS.

The Heart, inflam'd with am'rous Fire,
Glowing Charms and ripe Deſire,

Scorns

Scorns to yield to freezing Fear,
Fear and Doubt are Strangers here;
Sov'reign of the Boſom's Throne,
Love controuls, and Love alone.

Eldeſt BROTHER and SISTER.

RECITATIVE.

E. BRO. Siſter, I truſt our Father's long Diſeaſe
Will ſoon have End; his Med'cines have prevail'd;
And Nature's great Reſtorative begins
To crown our earneſt Pray'rs.

SIST. Ev'n now I left him
Folded in balmy Sleep. With ſofteſt Breathings
His Boſom mildly heav'd. Some heav'nly Dream
Inſpir'd, and whiſper'd Comfort to his Heart;
For, ever and anon, a gentle Smile
Stole on his Cheek, whileLife's recruited Stream,
In graceful Tints, gave Signs of inward Joy.

E. BRO. Thanks, gracious GOD! Hereon, beloved Siſter,
I build a Truſt immoveable.

AIR.

When pious Hearts, with Zeal unfeign'd,
The Throne of Heav'n addreſs,
The KING OF KINGS *an Ear will lend,*
Prone to pity, ſave, and bleſs.

FATHER,

FATHER, MOTHER, *and* NEIGHBOURS *advance.*

RECITATIVE.

SIST. And see! confirming this your pious Faith,
Our Sire has left his Couch; with added Strength
He moves this Way. Advance we to his Aid!

FATH. Ye (wond'rous Pair!) Ye, who can make Amends
For greater Pains, than one undutеous Boy
Can give an aged Parent's failing Heart,
Partake your Mother's Joy; from softest Sleep
Gently releas'd, some more than wonted Spirit
Informs my Mind, my Frame appears new-brac'd,
And every Pain is flown.

AIR.

Returning Health hath warm'd me,
Returning Strength hath arm'd me
To greet once more th' all-cheering Day;
With active Heat
My Pulses beat,
In nimble Round
My Spirits bound,
And revel in the sunny Ray.

RECITATIVE.

MOTH. Yes, yes, my Children;
The dearest Help-mate, Wife yet ever knew,
Heav'n has restor'd to my desiring Soul;
How shall I speak my Rapture, how my Praise?

QUAR-

QUARTETTO and CHORUS.

To pay our GOD *the Tribute due,*
Faint is Utt'rance, Words are few.

SIST. *Bended Knees, and proſtrate Heart,*
Grateful Thanks can beſt impart.

E. BRO. *What the falt'ring Tongue denies*
The Fullneſs of the Soul ſupplies.

FATH. *Yet your feeble Efforts try,*
Lift your Voices, lift them high!

CHORUS. *Yet your feeble Efforts, &c.*

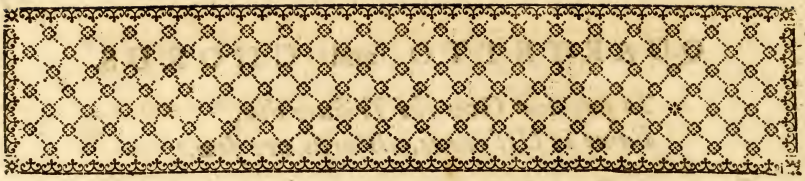
FATH. *When feeling Hearts their Thanks prefer,*
Each Sigh, each Thought, to Heav'n is dear.

CHORUS. *When feeling Hearts, &c.*

FATH. *Our* GOD, *who reigns in endleſs State,*
Is mild as juſt, and kind as great.

CHORUS. *Our* GOD, *who reigns in endleſs State,*
Is mild as juſt, and kind as great.

END of the SECOND PART.



PART THIRD.

CHORUS of RUSTICS.

ALL gracious GOD ! *Oh ! hear our Cry !*
Hear and redreſs---we faint---we dye.
No Dew to cheer the parching Ground,
A ſad, a dreary Waſte around !
The Hind ſurveys her helpleſs Brood,
Surveys, and moans their Want of Food !
Each living Thing, in wild Deſpair,
With piercing Howlings rends the Air.
All gracious GOD ! *Oh ! hear our Cry !*
Hear and redreſs---we faint---we dye.

FIRST COMPANION.

RECITATIVE.

1ſt. COM. A little longer yet, ye feeble Limbs,
Support my languid Frame ! While any Share
Of Strength remains, I muſt not, cannot leave
This miſerable Man. Oh ! had he ta'en
My friendly Admonition !---What a Change !

Few

Few Days are paſt, ſince I beheld him crown'd
With Stores for Length of Years---now, deſolate,
In tatter'd Weeds, (to theſe inclement Skies
His Body half expos'd) for very Need,
He tends a Ruſtic's Swine, and yearns to feed
On Huſks and Filth with his uncleanly Charge.
Lo! now he ſtarts, all frantic with his Woes;
His haggard Eye-Balls, and up-ſtaring Hair,
Speak his torn Mind---this Way, and that, he flies,
As tho' he ſhunn'd himſelf.

PRODIGAL *advances.*

Deſtruction come!---
In thy moſt horrid Shape---I ſhun thee not---
Is there within thy Treaſury of Plagues
Worſe than I now endure? The very Ruſtics
Taunt and deride my Wants---How many Servants,
Within my Father's Houſe, have Bread to ſpare,
While I with Hunger ſink---Deſtruction, come!

A I R.

Unappal'd, thou Sky, behold me,
All thy Plagues around me ſhow'r,
In thy blueſt Fires enfold me,
Thus I dare thy utmoſt Pow'r.

RECIT. accompanied.

What ſudden Bolt! O wiſh'd-for Blow! my Heart
Is cold---my Blood is froze---my ſightleſs Balls

Are ſunk in utter Darkneſs. Friendly Death,
Theſe are thy Terrors---thus I give thee Welcome.

1ſt. Com. Lo! daſh'd to Earth, a periſh'd Monument
Of black Deſpair he ſeems!

A I R.

In this dread Moment, gracious God,
His Pangs with Pity ſee;
Awake Remorſe within his Breaſt,
And turn his Heart to thee!
O! let the Spirit of thy Grace
His wand'ring Senſe reclaim;
That yet the Suff'rer may repent,
And live to praiſe thy Name!

RECITATIVE.

Prod. Oh, ruthleſs Fate!
Haſt thou again unclos'd my Eyes, to view
Theſe Scenes of Deſolation? Well I hop'd
I had been paſt the Reach of Pain and Grief;
But Oh! I wake to deeper Senſe of Woe,
Such as o'erbears my Spirits.---Every Nerve
To more than Infant-weakneſs is relax'd.
Ha! what are theſe---theſe falling Drops, that ſcald
The Cheek, they moiſten? my full Boſom glows.
Methinks, I now could pray---But in what Terms
Can Guilt, like mine, addreſs the Throne of Grace?

Solemn

SOLEMN CHORUS, by INVISIBLE SPIRITS.

Fear not---fear not---waft thy Pray'r!
Waft thy Thoughts, thy Wiſhes there!
Damp not now this infant Flame!
GOD, *and Mercy, are the ſame.*

RECITATIVE.

PROD. How can I hope my Crimes ſhould be forgiv'n?
How ſhall I dare look up, who, unconcern'd,
Could hear the Cry of wailing Miſery,
While Plenty crown'd me? I, who gave to Luxury,
To wretched Wantons, and intemperate Boards,
The poor Man's Dole?---No, I am paſt Forgiveneſs.

CHORUS repeated.

Fear not, &c.

1ſt. COM. Oh! bleſſed Sight! thoſe bended Knees! that Look,
Of meek, ſubmiſſive, ſilent, Adoration,
Imploring Strength and Counſel from above!
Angels of Good, aid, and direct his Mind!

PROD. I will ariſe, and go unto my Father,
And, ſtretch'd in Duſt beneath his rev'rend Feet,
Thus will I ſay unto him:

"*Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and in thy Sight,*
"*and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.*"

RECIT-

RECITATIVE.

1ſt. Com. Bleſs'd be our God! who hath inclin'd his Ear,
And turn'd this Sinner's Heart! let me but bear
This feeble Frame along, till I behold him
Claſp'd in a Father's Arms, and then---

Symphony of Aerial Music.

But hark!
What heav'nly Sounds! enkindling all my Soul
With Wonder and Delight!

Attend. Spirit. Thou choſen Man!
Whoſe conſcious Heart ſpontaneous cou'd reſiſt
Th' intoxicating Draught of falſe Delight,
Warn thy loſt Friend, mourn o'er his fall'n Eſtate,
And ſhare his Troubles, to redeem his Soul,

AIR and Chorus of Attendant Spirits.

Spir. *Go hence, in Triumph, go!*
Here ends thy Date of Woe---
No longer ſhall thy Boſom mourn---
Chorus. *Go hence, &c.*

Spir. *Bright Friendſhip and Renown*
Thy future Days ſhall crown;
To Pleaſure and to Peace return.
Chorus. *Bright Friendſhip, &c.*

Father,

FATHER, MOTHER, Elder BROTHER, and SISTER.

RECITATIVE.

FATH. Nay, fear me not, my Conſort; bounteous Heaven
Hath well repair'd my Strength; I can again
Join in the wholeſome Labours of the Field.

MOTH. My Life, be cautious, nor, with haſty Zeal,
Riſque the dear Bleſſing you ſo lately gain'd;
The Air, from recent copious Show'rs, is chill;
Theſe new-recover'd Beams but faintly ſhine,
And the rich Drops yet gliſten on the Graſs.
Lo! here our duteous Boy! he will prevent
Thy too-advent'rous Care.

E. BRO. With Pride, my Father---
My Life expos'd, to ſhield thy ſacred Health,
Were Tranſport to my Soul.

FATH. Go, my Support!
My Comfort, my Delight!

SIST. O! had a Portion
Of that ſweet Virtue, which inſpires this Brother,
Glow'd in the other's Breaſt, my honour'd Sire
Had known no Sorrows, in his Eve of Life.

FATH. Forbear, my Child, nor let the impious Breath
Of Murmur at our Lot pollute thy Lips;
Heav'n ſees, and judges beſt. Recall to Mind
The comfortable Rule I gave thy Youth,

Should

Should Pain or Diſappointment vex thy Heart.
Follow us in.

SIST. Yes, yes, thou beſt of Fathers,
Ne'er from my Mind ſhall that good Precept part.

AIR.

Againſt the Pow'r and Will divine,
Let no vain Mortal dare repine;
The KING of HEAV'N *alike is wiſe*
In what he grants, and what denies.

NEIGHBOUR *approaches.*

RECITATIVE.

NEIGHB. Hail, virtuous Fair! prepare thy Heart to taſte
Of Pleaſure mix'd with Pain. Thy wayward Brother
Is to theſe Plains return'd; but Oh! how chang'd!
A Beggar's abject Weeds begirt his Loins;
And in his Viſage Shame, Remorſe, and Anguiſh,
Have fix'd their Reſidence.

SIST. May that Remorſe
Plead for his Pardon in my Father's Breaſt!

NEIGHB. Diſtant, and awe-ſtruck, lo! he eyes the Roof,
Where once his deareſt Comfort dwelt!---he eyes,
But fears to enter now.

SIST. And ſee, my Father---
(Millions of Bleſſings warm his precious Heart!)

See

See how, thro' Haſte, he totters down the Steps,
And teaches Age to vie with agile Youth,
Eager to claſp, and take the Wand'rer in.
Lo! now the ſacred, dear Embrace! Cloſe-lock'd
To the full Boſom of my kneeling Brother,
(Whom from the Duſt he piouſly hath rais'd)
Tears are their only Language: let us on
To ſhare the Greetings---but with cautious Step,
Leſt, by too haſty Zeal, we interrupt
Theſe firſt ſtrong Workings of the mighty Joy,
Which bears too heavy on that aged Breaſt.

FATHER, MOTHER, and PRODIGAL.

A I R.

PROD. *Againſt high Heav'n, and thee, my Sire,*
Such great Offences have I done,
A Child's dear Claim I do not aſk,
No more deſerve the Name of Son;
Thy loweſt Servant let me be,
That State alas! too good for me.

RECITATIVE.

FATH. O! Welcome, welcome! Heav'n ſo deal with me,
As I receive my Boy!---Call, call my Friends!
My Neighbours! Servants!---Let them all attend,
And ſhare the old Man's Rapture! Rich Attire,
And coſtly Jewels bring, to deck my Wand'rer;
Feaſting and Muſic ſhall proclaim his Welcome,
And crown his penitential Heart with Joy!

TRIO.

FATH. *O! Repentance how precious!*
PROD. *O! Pardon how dear!*
BOTH. *Theſe Joys are too mighty for Mortal to bear!*
MOTH. *Delighted on ſuch do the Angels look down,*
Then waft the glad Tidings to Mercy's bright Throne.
FATH. *O! Repentance, &c.*
PROD. *O! Pardon, &c.*

Eldeſt SON *advances.*

RECITATIVE.

E. SON. For whom, my Father, theſe unuſual Sounds,
And Preparations?

FATH. O! my virtuous Son!
Thy once-dead Brother is alive again;
With pious Penitence, once more he ſeeks
A Parent's Roof, and Bleſſing.

E. SON. Then this Prodigal,
Who hath conſum'd thy Wealth in vicious Riot,
For very Need return'd, reaps a Reward
Unknown to blameleſs Duty. From my Youth,
When have I diſobey'd thee? Yet for me
Ne'er was the Minſtrel call'd, the Feaſt prepar'd.

FATH. My ſteddy Boy; thou Treaſure of my Age,
All, all I have, is thine. Not that thy Brother
Returns, thy Rival in a Father's Love;
But that a Sinner is reform'd, I joy.
For this I call the Gueſts, and raiſe the Song;
So Reaſon bids, and Heav'n itſelf approves.

E. SON.

E. Son. 'Tis true, my Father!---Thro' a fond Exceſs
Of Love, my Duty err'd---O! Pardon! Pardon!
Lo! he returns, cloath'd as befits thy Son;
Our Neighbours and Relations gather'd round,
With Looks of Tranſport hail his glad Return.
Let me ſupport thy rev'rend Steps to meet them,
Embrace my Brother, and improve his Rapture!

Father, Mother, E. Son, Daughter, Prodigal, and Neighbours.

AIR.

Moth. *Friends, who oft partook my Care,*
Now my riſing Pleaſure ſhare!
Share, and aid this grateful Strain,
That tries to ſpeak my Bliſs in vain;
Behold, behold, my new-born Joy,
My late-reſtor'd, repentant Boy!

GRAND CHORUS.

Begin---each tuneful Voice employ,
With ev'ry Pow'r of Muſic join'd,
To ſpread abroad, in Sounds of Joy,
This welcome Truth to all Mankind:

When Grace on guilty Minds hath beam'd,
And Sinners leave the wicked Way,
Devoutly bent no more to ſtray,
Celeſtial Thrones with Tranſport ring,
And Angel-Choirs exulting ſing
A Man reclaim'd, a Soul redeem'd!

FINIS.